

Hockey is a team sport. Two people are needed to pass the puck and a goalie can't guard the net without the help of defensemen.

"It doesn't really matter to me who shoots the puck as long as we score," said Drew Miller, captain of Michigan State University's hockey team.

Drew Miller isn't the captain of the team because he scores the most goals. He is just as happy when he assists his teammate Colton Fretter as he is when he shoots a goal himself. Miller knows a lot about teamwork and makes sure the other players know a lot about it as well.

"I make sure we all go out there and give it our all every game," Miller said while talking about his responsibilities as team captain.

Miller finds himself apart from his teammates for only a month or two in the summer. For the other ten months of the year his team does everything together, including playing a few harmless pranks on each other.

"One good one is when you put a cup of water in a guy's helmet and pour some in his gloves...we just have a good time at practice," Drew laughed before continuing, "but you practically go to war with these guys every game so you really bond."

His relationship with his teammates might be a huge part of his college hockey career right now, but Miller might not have even been playing hockey if not for his legendary family. He is the 10th member of the Miller family to be part of MSU's hockey program and has been sporting green and white forever.

"So from the time I was pretty much born they've been trying to get skates on me and get me on the ice," Miller said.

It was sometimes a struggle for "Ryan's little brother" or "one of the Millers" to step out of his family's shadow.

"A lot of the fans expected me to live up to them, that's where a lot of the pressure came from," Miller said.

When Miller received the assistant captain position on the team as only a sophomore, he differentiated himself from his older brother Ryan, a former goalie for MSU. Being one of only seven sophomores in the history of the program to be named assistant captain as a sophomore helped him break out as his own hockey player.

"I guess I'm one up on him now," said Miller in *Drew Miller: Building his Own Legacy*, and article on the MSU website, "No it's different for a goalie. A goalie doesn't have much room to be a leader."

Despite small fights and rivalries, he gets a lot of support from Ryan.

"When I was having a few off games last season, not scoring at all, my brother said I was thinking about it too much. He told me to get back to the hockey that I know. The next game I scored," Miller said.

Since Ryan is a goalie, it makes is easy for the brothers to scrimmage and play together.

"We just play and I shoot on him. He's gotten really good lately though, so I've had to run him into the net a lot when he blocks the puck," Miller said.

Miller said that while growing up, he not only had a supportive brother but supportive parents as well. They didn't push him too hard or expect too much from him.

"My parents let me have a life outside of hockey and didn't push my future in college or the pros too hard," Miller recounted, "without my own drive and determination or if my whole heart wasn't in the game, I never would have made it this far."

Miller doesn't think that anyone can play hockey on a college or professional level if they don't love the game.

"Usually by senior, sophomore, junior year of high school, the kids that are merely pushed by their parents quit," he explained.

As far as pushing his own kids to play hockey when the time comes, Miller hopes they choose to continue the family tradition.

"I want to give my kids the opportunity to play hockey, figure skate, or at least just get on the ice," Miller planned.

The tips and encouragement he received from his talented family were always much more valuable to him than the pressure that came with being a "Miller boy."

"It's awesome being able to learn from so many people that believe in you," he said.

Miller doesn't say that his most valuable experience in college hockey has been the improvement in his game. He doesn't say that it has been the fans. He doesn't even say it's been the thrill of the game.

"My most valuable experience has been my interactions with the people that I cherish."